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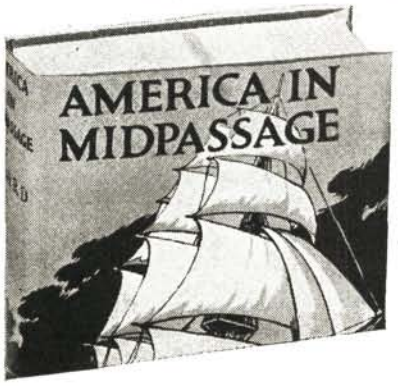

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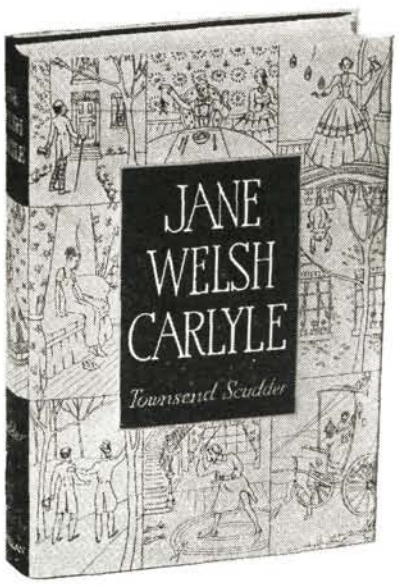

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Memories of Oscar Wilde

BY FORD MADOX FORD

IN December of the year before the trial of Oscar Wilde the writer's uncle called the male children of his family together and solemnly informed them that if any older man made to us "proposals or advances of a certain nature," we were morally and legally at liberty to kill him "with any weapon that offered itself." The person speaking thus was not merely the brother of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the pre-Raphaelite poet, but also her Majesty's Secretary of the Inland Revenue; one of the most weighty and responsible of Great Britain's permanent officials, and the most reasonable human being ever sent on this earth.

From that you may understand that London parents of adolescent male children of the end of '94 saw "perverters" lurking in all the shadows; and Wilde and Oscarisms, in their several kinds, were the preoccupation of that metropolis almost to the exclusion of all other intellectual pabula. And, beneath the comfortable strata of Society, growled the immense, frightening quicksand of the Lower Classes and the underworld, with ears all pricked up to hear details of the encounters of their own Fighting Marquis, a toff called Wilde, and the riff-raff of the Mews. Every two or three days, inspired by the generous port of his lunch, the Home Secretary issued a warrant against Mr. Wilde; but in the mists of before-dinner indigestion ordered it withdrawn. The Queen and Mr. Gladstone, then retired, were mercifully shielded from these whisperings — or Heaven knows what they would not have done!

The writer, however, was conscious of none of these things . . . until the first night of "The Importance of Being Earnest." Instances—or indeed knowledge —of what was called "perversion" had never come his way; even Mr. Rossetti's exhortation had seemed nearly unmeaning. And that any blame could attach to Mr. Wilde would have seemed fantastic. Mr. Wilde was a quiet individual who came every Saturday, for years, to tea with the writer's grandfather — Ford Madox Brown. Wilde would sit in a high-backed armchair, stretching out one hand a little towards the blaze of the wood fire on the hearth and talking of the dullest possible things to Ford Madox Brown, who, with his healthy colored cheeks and white hair cut like the King of Hearts, sat on the other side of the fire in another high-backed chair and, stretching out towards the flames his other hand, disagreed usually with Mr. Wilde on subjects like that of the Home Rule for Ireland Bill or the Conversion of the Consolidated Debt.

Oscar Wilde, 1895—portrait by Toulouse-Lautrec

Mr. Wilde was, in fact, for the writer and, as far as he knows, for his cousins, the younger Rossettis, what we should have called one of the common objects of the countryside. Like Ford Madox Brown's other old friends or protégés and poor relations he had his weekly day on which to pay his respects to the Father of the pre-Raphaelites. He had begun the practice during a long period of very serious illness on the part of the older man and he continued it, as he said later, out of liking for the only house in London where he did not have to stand on his head.

Certainly, there, he could be as quiet as he liked, for, as often as not, he and Madox Brown would sit silent for minutes on end in the twilight. So that the painter was accustomed to deny that the young poet who sat at his feet possessed any wit at all and, since Madox Brown died the year before the Wilde-Queensberry trial, he went to his death without any knowledge at all of the singular nature of the bird of paradise who had nestled on Saturday afternoons in the high-backed *bergère* beside the fire. Thus the only utterance of that date that comes back to the writer as at all weighty on the part of Mr. Wilde, the private gentleman, was an admission that he had been mistaken in a political prophecy. The Tory Government of that day had decided to reduce the rate of interest on Consols. Mr. Wilde had prophesied that that "conversion" would be disastrous to the finances of the country. The rate was, however, reduced from 3 to 2¾% without any panic on the Stock Exchange. The Government had triumphed, and the writer still remembers very vividly the, by then extremely bulky, figure of Wilde as he entered the studio in a Saturday dusk, came to a standstill, loosened his great overcoat, removed his gloves and in the fashion of the day, smacked them against his left hand palm, and exclaimed in a voice of unusual sonority: "I see I was wrong, Brown, about Consols!"

And the writer might add that the last poem of Christina Rossetti—the manuscript of which he happens to possess—is written on the back of a used envelope on the front of which the poetess had made a number of jottings—as to fluctuations in the price of Consols. So much did that day resemble our own!

Thus, the first intimation of what,

Next Week

ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG MAN
By JOHN DOS PASSOS
Reviewed by John Chamberlain

THE SPIRIT OF FRENCH CANADA
By IAN FORBES FRASER
Reviewed by Stephen Leacock

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whether it were irresponsible or sinister, Wilde meant to London and later to the world, came with Lord Queensberry's presentation of his bouquet to Wilde on the first night of "The Importance of Being Earnest." That was an occasion! The writer may have been obtuse or may have been merely inexperienced. But it was impossible during the performance of the play not to feel that both the audience and the quality of that audience's emotions were something different from those of any other first night he had attended. That audience was almost infinitely "smart." It consisted, presumably, one-half of "decadents" more or less reckless and irresponsible, and of rich, more or less cultured and titled people who were, at least, in the know and presumably did not disapprove of what Wilde represented. What exactly Wilde represented at that moment it would be too complicated here to analyze.

On the fall of the curtain, Wilde appeared, rather pallid, blinking against the glare of the footlights and singularly prophetic of what Mr. Morley looked like in "Oscar Wilde" at the Fulton Theater the other day. He said some words, in the voice of Mr. Morley, that singular mixture of Balliol and brogue. Then unrest in the audience made him hesitate. His eyes, always uneasy, roved more uneasily than usual over the whole audience from gallery to pit. An immense pink and white bouquet was being carried down the gangway between the stalls.

That alone was sufficient to cause tittering emotion—because bouquets were only handed to women. But when the bouquet reached that solitary black figure with the pallid face and the audience could realize of what it consisted, then an extraordinarily black undertone of panic surged right through that semi-oval bowl. You saw men starting to their feet and women pulling their ermine cloaks hastily up over their shoulders—as if they felt they must incontinently flee from a scene on which violence was about to burst out.

For that bouquet consisted, plain to the view, of carrots and turnips framed in a foam of coarse lace paper. The panic in the face of Wilde exceeded the final panic that came over him under the cross-examination of Sir Edward Carson in *Wilde vs. Queensberry*. He shook and his lips bubbled. During the trial his breakdown was very gradual; there behind the footlights he was struck by a thunderbolt. For he and all the hundreds in the theater had realized within a second that this was Queensberry's final insult to the author of that play. The whole matter *could* no longer keep under ground. And the hurried exit of all that audience from the theater was like a public desertion of that unfortunate idol of the unthinking. You saw people running to get out and the cries of encouragement of the few decadents who had the courage to take it were completely drowned in the voices of those departing who were explaining to each other what it all meant. And next day all whispering London heard that the Marquis had left in the hall of Wilde's club a card of his own bearing an unmistakable insult.

Thus, the libel action of Wilde against the Marquis was a really horrible occasion. It was not so much Wilde as the spirit of irresponsibility that was on its trial and so many of us all—all London that in the remotest degree counted—had been guilty of sympathizing with the spirit of irresponsibility.

And there was another feature. It should be remembered that for the first and last time in the whole history of London the Arts, at least of painting and poetry, had really for a year or so counted as one of the important attributes of the metropolis. We, the poets and painters of London, had for the first time in the history of the world, become front-page news. Our hearths, our bookshelves, our favorite dogs, our back-yards, were photographed for publication with all the honors of flashlights. Yes, the very pen of this writer here writing was reproduced in the shiny papers of the capital's weeklies and his inkpot, too.

This accounted for the hesitation of the Home Secretary in issuing and withdrawing his warrant. People who then used the pen in London were a clan with whom one must very seriously take account. And the same fact accounted for the final downfall of Wilde. He could not believe that the Victorian state would dare to measure itself against the chief pre-Raphaelite poet and the foremost playwright of the day.

His breakdown at the Queensberry trial came very slowly and was, therefore, the more agonizing. The cross-examination at the hands of Carson lasted at least as long as the whole play of "Oscar Wilde" at the Fulton. And it was obviously impossible that our sympathies should not go out to that doomed rat in that rat-pit without issue. Every time that he got back on Carson—as when he said: "No, it is not poetry when you read it," one breathed with relief as if a sorry hero had achieved the impossible. For in the arid panoply of English law procedure the dice are so weighted in favor of the cross-examiner that one would doubt if the archangel Michael or in the alternative Machiavelli could ever finally get back on learned counsel. Wilde, however, came very near it once or twice.

No, your sympathies were bound to be with Wilde in that place and on that occasion. It is a detail that is by no means a criticism of the art displayed on the Fulton stage that the cross-examination there shown in no way duplicated the process of the London law-courts. There was none of the shouting and parading about the court by counsel that the Fulton stage showed. Sir Edward Carson spoke from a sort of a box, at some distance from the plaintiff and in a quite low if very clear voice. It made it the more horrible when suddenly you saw that pallid man's left hand begin to quiver along the lower edge of his waistcoat. And then a long time afterwards his right hand, holding his gloves, quivering on the lapel of his coat. You just waited and waited for the next sign of discomfiture until finally it came with his throwing his gloves hysterically into the well of the court, his lips bubbling with undistinguishable words until they ended in silence. The whole three stages of breakdown took perhaps an hour and a half to accomplish.

Yes, Wilde overestimated the position in the Victorian hierarchy of a poet-playwright who was the cynosure of two continents. He felt behind him all the

(*Continued on page* 15)

Vandamm

Robert Morley (second from right) as Wilde in the play by Leslie and Sewell Stokes

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Margaret Bourke-White

Family in Dahlonega, Georgia. From "You Have Seen Their Faces" (Viking)

Realities on Tobacco Road

THESE ARE OUR LIVES. As Told by the People and Written by Members of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1939. $2.

Reviewed by VIRGINIUS DABNEY

THOSE who look upon the Federal Writers' Projects with a jaundiced eye, on the theory that the directors of such projects are necessarily maestros of the boondoggle, should consider this volume. It is the work of good, and at times distinguished, craftsmen. The WPA may have spent some of its money in fantastically extravagant ways —although I believe such allegations to be considerably exaggerated—but "These Are Our Lives" is not one of them.

Mr. W. T. Couch, the able director of the University of North Carolina Press, tells us in his preface that no volume of this precise kind has ever been published before in any country. Here are presented, in graphic form, segments of life in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, as described by persons in various strata of society to writers on WPA. One has only to read these minuscule autobiographies to feel that they have the ring of authenticity. Of course, there is some unevenness. A few are lacking in that vivid incisive quality which lifts certain others in the collection to the plane of high art.

It is noteworthy that the editors have included interviews with the prosperous and the well-to-do, as well as the poor and the destitute. Hence we have here no Caldwellian or Faulknerian excursion into the cesspools of Southern crime, degeneracy, and lust. It is a balanced symposium which makes no effort to gloss over the realities of life among the sharecroppers and mill hands, but which also exhibits an awareness of Southern initiative, enterprise, and thrift.

The idea that most Southerners of humble station are lunatics, perverts, sadists, or lynchers has been planted in many minds by the school of Southern writers which Mr. Gerald Johnson has cogently dubbed "the horror mongers." One thing which appeals to me in the volume before us is the absence of such degenerates. After all, degenerates are the exception, rather than the rule, both North and South.

At the same time, this book presents a vivid picture of the poverty and ignorance, the destitution and degradation of many Southern toilers. Yet a number of the poorest and most unsuccessful of those interviewed are seen to be persons of innate dignity, frustrated in their strivings for better things by the system under which they have been forced to live and work. Take Kate Brumby, whose poignant life story is beautifully rendered by Ida Moore. This illiterate and aging mill hand, whose fiancé died of typhoid fever when she was a girl, and who is "goin' to meet him in heaven one day too," might have achieved what is commonly termed "success," given decent opportunities and a different environment.

Such characters are vividly limned in "These Are Our Lives." Somehow they interested me far more than the relatively successful farmers and business men, who also are given a hearing. The dialogue, and particularly the dialect, is superb, and the whole volume is an important contribution to our understanding of Southern civilization.

No World for the Little Man

THE SALESMAN. By John Herrmann. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

BY one of those curious tricks of association, which have a logic all their own, this book calls up a vision of that long gallery of little business men who people Sinclair Lewis's novels. One sees at once, how happy they were! George F. himself, and Dodsworth, and that man who knew Coolidge, and even the traveling salesman in "Work of Art" who came roaring through the hotels on his yearly trip; happy, all of them, in a world they understood because it was exactly as they made it. Or was Lewis a romanticist all the time? Here, at any rate, is the other side of the medal, a portrait so real and drab and immediate that it hurts: John Herrmann's salesman is a little man immersed in conditions he does not understand, has had no hand in making, and can never, it is clear, manipulate to his own advantage. He is not a dreamer nor a hero, certainly not a thinker. But he is a good fellow who respects the virtues; the most tragic aspect of his story is his fidelity to duty, to loyalty and perseverance, to wife and boss, to all the copybook maxims that are never going to do him any good.

We watch Robert Crawford trying to sell his line of picture-frames, setting up his samples, sparring carefully with tough buyers, giving them all the planned arguments he knows neither he nor they can believe in. Business is contracting now. People aren't buying, merchants aren't ordering, the banks are waiting to gather in the small home he lives in; and Crawford has still to crack his lips with the smile and the optimism: "Let me double that order. You know what the Christmas business is going to be with all those men back at work and all the confidence there is in recovery this year."

And of course there isn't any watertight compartment to hold a happy, soothing private life. The whole thing seeps through—the grind, the despair, the failure, the fatigue, especially the fatigue—and poisons his relations with his wife. Has anybody ever written that a man can be too deflated of ego, too worn and humiliated by his work, to enjoy love? Herrmann has given us the process in deadly detail, by which a little man is stripped of his spirit. He has done it with the devices of naturalism, the authentic, stock phrasings of the Robert Crawfords, who never put two words together that have never been put together before, and a thorough-going, functional view of society in its contracting cycle, squeezing the Crawfords out of sight. This novel, soundly written, is to remember them by.

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Collective Interference

THE NEW DEAL IN OLD ROME. By H. J. Haskell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. $2.50.

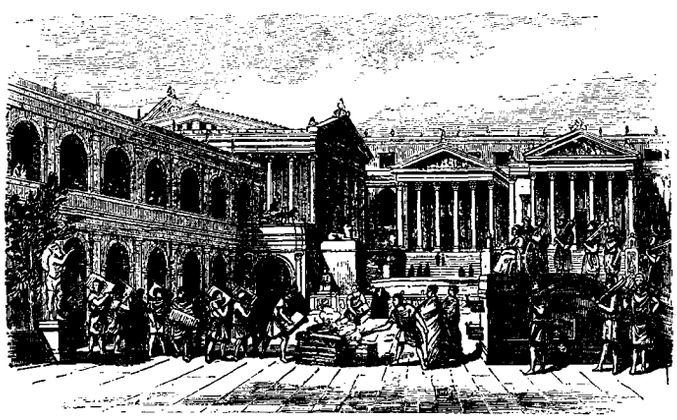
Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

THE drawing of historical parallels is usually regarded by professional historians as beneath their dignity, and so is left to partisans or moralists who are apt to know little about either the old or the new. Mr. Haskell, editor of the *Kansas City Star,* has here shown how it ought to be done. He knows what he is talking about and he has no axe to grind; neither champions nor haters of the current New Deal will get much campaign ammunition out of what he truly defines as "an objective survey of instances of government interference." With a learning amazing in a man whose job must keep him busy, he has digested pretty nearly all the historians both ancient and modern, judging what he read with the coolly scientific eye of a newspaperman who has been professionally engaged for forty years in the study of contemporary politics and economics.

He knows that history follows the laws of Einstein, not those of Euclid; that there are no exact parallels. Accordingly he does not say, This is what the Romans did in this situation, this is what happened to them, and the same dreadful things will happen to us if we don't watch out. He says only, This is what the Romans did in a comparable though by no means identical situation, and this is what happened to them—sometimes dreadful, sometimes not. And a reviewer might summarize the conclusion something like this: In hard times the people will always expect the government to do something, usually the government will do it; sometimes it will work pretty well for a long time; even though in the end collective interference may produce no more than what Marx called a "retardation" in the operation of economic forces, a retardation of a century or two is often worth the effort.

On the other hand, political or economic measures are apt to have consequences unforeseen. Gaius Gracchus thought of relief as a purely temporary measure; but once it was started nothing ever stopped it except the reactionary dictatorship of Sulla, and that for only a few years; the early Empire recognized unemployment as a "chronic and permanent" problem and found relief the simplest answer.

Most of Haskell's conclusions you will find in the professional historians, but he whittles them to a point, using the modern equivalent of ancient terminology wherever his historical conscience permits. When he calls the Roman friends of Polybius the country-club set, and substitutes for the misleading term equites "the Chamber of Commerce crowd," he is drawing parallels that are close enough, and more intelligible to his readers. And he finds plenty of new deals in Rome; the first one was the Licinian Rogations of 367 B.C., whose economic reforms had to be safeguarded by a constitutional change that channeled off popular interest, so that the economic situation was in the long run not greatly improved. The much more extensive New Deal of Gaius Gracchus was only moderately successful because "the fundamental causes of the farm problem had not been reached"—chiefly slavery, the ancient equivalent of farm mechanization.



Trajan burning the tax lists. Even under his benevolent despotism "the memory of oppression could warp the first-rate mind of Tacitus" . . .

But from that time on the government was constantly interfering with business. Augustus, with an easy-money policy and heavy government spending (which had to be curtailed when the accumulated treasures of Egypt had been exhausted) promoted a boom that finally blew up in the panic of A.D. 33. Tiberius had to relieve it with something like the RFC. Domitian set up an AAA, Nerva an FCA, Trajan an NYA, and so on.

After the colossal disasters of the third century, government was again the only agency that could do anything, and it concentrated on saving the framework of society without being able to worry about what was inside the framework. Rostovtzeff, writing thirteen or fourteen years ago, correctly described the system founded by Diocletian and perfected by Constantine as a "permanent and organized crisis"; the lapse of time has enabled Haskell to use a shorter definition, equally correct—the totalitarian state. (There was to be sure no Party in this later Empire, but the army—at first largely Illyrian, then largely German—played a not altogether dissimilar role.)

Besides this story, familiar to students but here presented so that anybody can understand it, the reader will be interested in many of the insights of an observer who does not suffer from the handicap that so often biases the professional historian, the need of proving that some other scholar was wrong. Haskell thinks that Catiline, if not framed, was certainly slandered; and interprets the interaction in his character of personal bitterness and a genuine zeal for the underprivileged, with a plausibility possible only to a man who has known a good many disappointed politicians. He reminds you that Rome had its sit-down strikes too; when Aurelian sent in troops to clear out the sit-downers, as Frank Murphy did not, there was a fight that cost seven thousand lives and might at that particular moment have wrecked the Empire. He has some entertaining comments on the letter that Quintus Cicero wrote to his brother when he was running for consul, advising him to smear his opponents (the reputation of Catiline proves that the advice was taken) and to promise the voters anything, on the ground that broken promises were always safer than refusals. (Ask Phil La Follette, who last fall refused to compete with his rivals in pension promises to senior citizens, and took the licking of his life.)

Useful too are Haskell's observations on the Golden Age, the century between Domitian and Commodus when civilization, instead of consolidating its gains and pushing ahead, slipped into gradual decline. The slave gangs had all but vanished from the great ranches but Italy was cultivated by share croppers who had to "mine the soil" as share croppers must today. Industry used slaves instead of machinery, and consequently nobody felt an incentive to the simplest inventions that free workmen might have made to save themselves effort. Also — a point that nobody seems to have stressed sufficiently —Roman prosperity vanished with the disappearance of the open frontier. No doubt it is true that the "Italian nucleus" had already been spread pretty thin over a largely barbarian empire; but from the purely economic point of view the collapse was postponed so long as there was new country to be opened up and developed. Once the frontier was gone the problem that had always been waiting in the background had to be faced, then as now—how to distribute the products of industry and agriculture in a society more than two thirds of whose members were ill-clothed, ill-housed, and ill-fed, even in the days of Antoninus Pius; and then as now, nobody knew the answer.

There were other reasons, of course,

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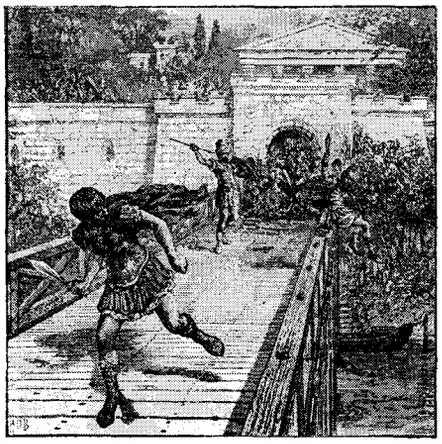

Flight of Gaius Gracchus. He "thought of relief as a temporary measure" . . .

chiefly the very obscure "failure of nerve." The decadence of literature and thought under a despotism is something more intelligible today than a quarter of a century ago; even under so benevolent a despot as Trajan the memory of oppression could warp the first-rate mind of Tacitus and make him confuse effects with causes; and after Tacitus there were no more first-rate minds, except in jurisprudence. A reviewer might suggest—with some diffidence, and acknowledgments to the contemporary Italian press—one possible further reason. Fascist Italy, needing its foreign exchange for war material, is just now trying to persuade its citizens to substitute wine and lemonade for coffee, its newspapers arguing that the old Romans did not need coffee to conquer the world. True enough; but second-century Rome might never have suffered that "failure of nerve" if it had started the day right with coffee (preferably made by its Batavian subjects).

Like everybody else, Haskell discusses the "decline and fall," from the viewpoint of his time—a viewpoint that would have been more intelligible to Gibbon than to nineteenth-century historians. (And we shall be lucky if in a few decades we do not slip back from the viewpoint of Gibbon to that of Orosius.) Like any man of 1939, Haskell knows that any civilization is lucky that can stave off decline and fall for a couple of centuries; Rome might have withstood, as other civilizations have withstood, some of the disintegrating influences; but when they all "ganged up on it" in the third century, the Roman fabric could not stand the pressure. The republic had been an age of rugged individualism that ran wild; the "get-rich-quick era" after the Second Punic War demoralized rich and poor alike; when the frontier was closed the Empire became, as Frank and Rostovtzeff have remarked, "a nation of coupon cutters." There was no more economic imperialism, there was little profit in foreign trade; the only alternative was a redistribution of purchasing power which never came into question between the days of Catiline and those of Maximinus Thrax—by which time, with increasing military expenditures, there was no longer enough purchasing power to go round.

All this, however, is aside from the specific questions that Haskell is writing about. He points the obvious lessons of the drawbacks of increasing centralization and decay of local initiative, of the excessive spending on city halls and courthouses and swimming pools and the like. But "the modern world has far greater resources than the Roman Empire. It is quite impossible to draw a safe inference from the Roman experience as to the limits of modern spending. There is merely the obvious warning that it is possible to go so far as to involve destructive taxation with the dangers of inflation." Also the masses of the people could not "find work through which they might maintain decent standards of living. . . . They had no sense of partnership in the glittering life above them which they helped support." When the third century wiped out most of the propertied and educated classes, few people were left who had enough stake in the country to feel that it was worth fighting for.

> The fundamental modern social problem [says Haskell] is the problem that Rome failed to solve. It is the problem of building a unified yet free society, with decent minimum standards of living. A society so intelligently and justly organized that there is no menacing submerged class. A society that provides reasonable incentives for the free rise of a general staff of competent managers whose ranks are always open to fresh recruits. A society that develops a social pressure under which leaders accept an enlightened far-sighted view of their responsibilities.

Nothing new about the problem, ladies and gentlemen. All we need now is the answer.

Obstinately in Love

ANGRY MAN'S TALE. By Peter de Polnay. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THE publishers inform us that "Angry Man's Tale" is Peter de Polnay's first novel, and the reader gathers for himself that this author has a name that is at least half French, that he tells his tale in the character of an Englishman, and that his writing accent is sometimes American. Beyond that, I know nothing of him and can only speculate regarding his nationality, age, background, and experience. But no matter; the book's the thing.

It is a competent, well-turned book rather than an impressive or an exciting one, and it shows its author to be French in more than name, for it is written with an economy that is found more usually in French fiction than in English or American. (Our writers of the hard-boiled school have their own sparing way with words, but it is a surface way, whereas the French economy, when applied to what used to be called matters of the heart, cuts deftly but deeply into the physiology and psychology of passion.) The story that Peter de Polnay tells is a love story, played out in Majorca, Spain, and Portugal. It is the story of a man who is in love with a third-rate girl, unreasonably and obstinately in love, and who drifts into marriage with a woman whom one guesses to be first-rate. One guesses, because Mrs. Gailey's character is never resolved by any action that can be called definitive, and Polnay is not given to supplementing bare accounts of behavior with informative description. The core of even the narrator's character eludes us, despite his entertaining interior dialogues with an amusing *alter ego*. Tony Trent introduces himself to us as a rudderless young English writer who is not writing, obsessed by a girl, and that is what he remains,—plus a young man who endures a remarkably complete nervous breakdown. We see the girl, Constance, by adding as we will to a minimum of physical description (lovely breasts, ugly ankles), and we learn that she is vulgar of thought, unpredictable of action, and probably as self-deluded as Madame Bovary.

Peter de Polnay

No, Peter de Polnay is not expansive regarding his characters, but as one writes of his book and reflects upon it, one realizes that he has probably told enough of them for his purpose, that he may even, bit by bit, have told more than is at first apparent. One thing is certain: this author is expert in his employment of the weaving method, whereby he repeatedly shuttles backward and forward in time to bring the stuff of his story's past into the present and growing fabric of his narrative.

When one wishes to be charitable towards a first novel, one calls it promising. "Angry Man's Tale" deserves something better than such condescension, for Peter de Polnay has already proved himself a finished workman. His problem is that of finding material for his skill, not that of mastering his medium. Meantime, he has entertained us admirably without moving us, and the character of his entertainment suggests that his genuine wit and humor will probably dominate anything he may write.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Notes on an American Opera

FUTURES in music are even more uncertain than in literature; particularly so in American music; most of all in the operatic field. Deems Taylor's "Peter Ibbetson," Walter Damrosch's "Man Without a Country," and Mark Blitzstein's "The Cradle Will Rock" are the only ones which can be said at present to enjoy any expectancy of life.

Because American opera has never managed to amount to much, because (in spite of a few temporary successes) one effort after another to produce a native music drama has failed to live up to the ballyhoo, it is exciting to see one more production in this form which has the breath of life in it. Perhaps it is owing as much to the unpretentiousness as to the vigor of "The Devil and Daniel Webster," by Stephen Vincent Benét and Douglas Moore, that one feels hopeful for its future beyond the schedule of current performances by the American Lyric Theatre in New York.

"The Devil and Daniel Webster" is notable for several qualities. First of all, it is a good show. It goes. Successful in story-telling, it is equally noteworthy in characterization, particularly in its portrayals of Mary Stone, bride of the man who has sold his soul to the devil, and of Webster himself. (Not that this Webster is a rounded representation of the original by any means; in fact his resemblance to the original is largely symbolic; but he is alive and credible.) The libretto is written with a realistic historical sense—only in one place, the peroration of Webster's address to the jury, running close to the conventional rhetoric of July 4th patriotism: and here, no doubt, the rhetoric is intentional. Both in the simple New Hampshire background and in the evocation of the evil dead, in the embodiment of the ghostly jury, "The Devil and Daniel Webster" is convincing.

This column makes no pretense to competence in music criticism, and we should hesitate in any event to attempt an evaluation of a score after one hearing. The music which Douglas Moore has composed for "The Devil and Daniel Webster" seems to us vigorous, organic, and intelligible. It is usually meaningless to say that any music is "American"; this music, however, is American in at least two respects: it is unfailingly appropriate to its subject matter; and, unlike many other American compositions, it does not, in whole or in part, forcibly remind us of any European composer. There were no phrases or modulations which made us say to ourselves, "there is Wagner," "there is Debussy," or "there is Brahms."

Stephen Vincent Benét wrote in last week's *Saturday Review* of his problems as a librettist and how he solved them. No doubt he will permit an admirer of his opera to make a few comments possibly at variance with his own views. Mr. Benét spoke of the idiocy of setting such lines as "Won't You Sit Down?" to music. In spite of that, in spite of the contemporary impatience with conventional recitative, the alternation of singing with spoken dialogue—traditional though it may be in opera—bothered us in "The Devil and Daniel Webster." One reason is that the score is organically composed; it does not run to isolated arias; it flows, it has musical continuity and structure, and it should not be interrupted.

The justification, of course, is in the dramatic effect; but the musical passages interrupt the drama as much as the spoken passages interrupt the music. It is all very well to plead for opera in English; the fact is that opera in English, until you become independently familiar with the words, is not a great deal more intelligible than opera in European. On a first hearing, you understand isolated phrases of what is sung and that is all. The connection between Webster's invocation to liberty and the trial of Jabez Stone, tenuous enough when you read the scene, becomes non-existent on the stage if you miss a few lines of the script. This being the case, it seems to us that "The Devil and Daniel Webster" suffers from the alternation of prose and poetry, speech and singing. Both as drama and as opera it is good as far as it goes, but it is neither quite one nor the other.

WPA Books Coincidentally with the publication of "These Are Our Lives," one of the most distinguished of the books prepared by the Federal Writers' Project (reviewed on page 5), we learn that forty-four publishers have addressed a letter to the Chairman of the House Subcommittee to Investigate WPA, refuting charges that Writers' Project books are vehicles of propaganda. "As far as propaganda is concerned," the letter states, "we believe that these books contain far less personal bias than is usually found in books dealing with the American scene." Certainly the reviews which we have published of most of these volumes bear out that statement. The letter points out further that while the research and editorial costs of the books are met by the government, manufacturing and distribution costs come from private sources. "Aside from any question of the necessity of maintaining this and the other Arts Projects as a means of self-respecting employment for artists and writers, we are convinced that the entire output of the Federal Writers' Project can stand scrutiny squarely on its own merit." The *SRL* concurs.

Child That I Never Had

BY SHIRLEY BARKER

CHILD that I never had, you owe me more
Than any man of flesh can owe his mother:
Armor no mob can spit upon or bore
With lead; the knowledge no man is your brother
And hence deserving of you. Nothingness?
There are worse legacies of stain and blight.
You might have paid with fifty years duress
For sport I took at kissing in the night.

Girl that I never had, you will not know
All earth's horizons in one tall young man
As I have done, but you are better so
Than bound in service to the futile plan
Of generation. Oh unwaking son,
Infallible and unbetrayed to clay,
Not by the crumbling forts my fathers won
Shall I appoint you heir to their decay.

Women who cannot see beyond delight,
Or women who believe, or those who hope,
Cling to the strong arm, claim their ancient right.
And curse with breath the children who must grope
Into an ever-darker chaos. Shrinking
Back from the baffled girl, the bleeding lad,
I shall go down my last road proudly linking
My arms with arms of heirs I never had

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Letters to the Editor: *The Last Episode of "The Grapes of Wrath"*

Steinbeck and Maupassant

SIR:—I note that you object to the *Providence Journal* reviewer's calling the final episode of "The Grapes of Wrath" banal. Could one call it very original?—for instance, about ⅜ of an inch away, in the next column to your censure, a reviewer mentions Maupassant's stories: don't you know that Maupassant's treatment of almost the same situation in "An Idyll" is well enough known to make the Steinbeck version seem a bit flat? At all events, the thing seems to me more effective as a short story than as the climax of a novel. I presume that the resemblance is accidental, but Maupassant did write "An Idyll," and lots of people have read it.

BEN C. CLOUGH.

Providence, R. I.

The Big Book

SIR:—The article by Jo Hubbard Chamberlin on the Sears-Roebuck catalogue reminds me of an incident once reported to me by a relative living on a small and rather lonely island off the coast of New England.

Two lads, whose lives had heretofore been devoted to fishing and lobstering, decided to see the mainland. Among the cities they planned to visit was Chicago. Shortly before their departure, one of the older women came to them and said in an admonitory tone of voice: "Now don't forget to call on Mr. Sears."

It may well have been the same woman who came to my relative, upon the latter's return from a short trip to New York City, and asked: "Did you see my brother George in New York while you were there, Jane?" "No," said Jane. "Well," said the disappointed sister. "I guess his boat couldn't have been in."

I get a great deal of pleasure not only from the articles in *The Saturday Review*, but also from the Double-Crostics, over which I actually slave.

EDITH CONDON.

Chicago, Ill.

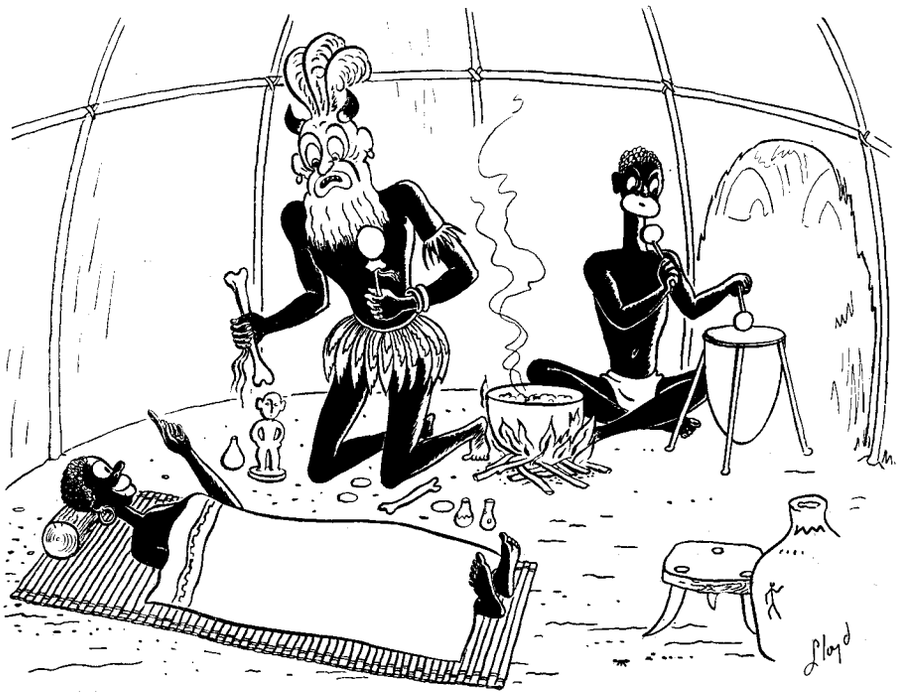
Planning and Predictions

SIR:—Your article, in the May 6 issue, by Crane Brinton seems strangely familiar. In fact its general emphasis has been frequently heard at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Society and similar groups. There is no doubt that knowledge about society should be made more accurate and scientific. But there will always be those who insist that growing knowledge should be made useful to society.

An examination of recent literature shows that sociologists, as a class, are not particularly animated by planning ideas. If they are interested, it is in self-defense, to avoid the forms of military regimentation and non-social use of resources, and to insist that planning be for social ends and for social welfare. But the planning idea has been useful in promoting social knowledge and it may occasion no surprise that unemployed men, underprivileged, and victims of aggression should want to do something about conditions. As Professor Brinton wrote in his "Anatomy of Revolution," "Certainly one quiet person emerges from his study, not indeed untouched by a good deal of horror and disgust, but moved also with admiration for a deep and unfathomable strength in men which, because of the softer connotation of the word, he is reluctant to call spiritual."

GUY V. PRICE.

Teachers College of Kansas City
Kansas City, Mo.



"Now promise not to put me into a book, doctor!"

Genealogy on Baker Street

SIR:—1. Do you suppose that Cecil Scott Forester, author of "Captain Horatio Hornblower" and "Flying Colours" reviewed in the April 29 *S.R.L.* (as well as of some other swell sea fighting stories) may be the son or (how rapidly we age!) the grandson of Mr. Cecil Forrester (the extra r is no doubt Watson's), the employer of Miss Mary Moran? If so he might be able to throw some light on the "little domestic complication" in which Holmes had been able to serve Mrs. F. —. Holmes thought it a very simple case, but Mrs. F. didn't. She was much impressed by Holmes's kindness and skill.

2. This month's *Fortune* says of N.B.C.'s experiments in television: "It has staged seventy-eight shows . . . The most successful of these was a play called 'The Adventure of the Three Garridebs . . .'" Author not, one presumes, worthy of mention, and surely they ought to say it was based on the story of John H. Watson, M.D. After all, that story cost Watson blood—the only time (or am I wrong?) when he shed his vital tide in the service of Holmes.

ROBERT K. LEAVITT.

Scarsdale, N. Y.

What Hay Meant

SIR:—In a letter from John Hay to William H. Herndon on Lincoln, recently made public, there is a baffling phrase. In justice both to Lincoln and John Hay himself, the phrase calls for an interpretive modification.

The reference is to the words, "intellectual arrogance." I submit that the word "arrogance" may be regarded as a verbal slip—an overstepped word. It does not accord with the tenor of the letter, closing with the words "as the greatest character since Christ."

What Hay really meant was that Lincoln possessed intellectual *assurance*. Arrogance is the characteristic of little puffed-up people. Arrogance and greatness do not co-exist. Says John Ruskin: "The first test of a truly great man is his humility."

Lincoln may not have been modest, no great man is; but he was humble, which not all men rated great are. Simple grandeur—that was Abraham Lincoln.

GABRIEL WELLS.

New York City.

Printing on Long Island

SIR:—Mr. John Anderson, who is compiling, under the auspices of the Queens Borough Public Library, a definitive bibliography of books printed on Long Island prior to 1831, is most anxious to inspect any public or private collections in this field which he has not already examined.

Owners of such material and others who know of the existence of special collections are requested to correspond with Mr. Richard B. Sealock, Curator of the Long Island Collection, Queens Borough Public Library, 89-14 Parsons Boulevard, Jamaica, New York.

JOSEPH W. ROGERS.

Queens Borough Public Library.

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The Human Element in War

THE ROAD TO RICHMOND. The Civil War Memoirs of Major Abner R. Small. Edited by Harold Adams Small. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1939. $3.50.

Reviewed by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

"I ONLY wish that a war so hard fought could have been succeeded by an honest peace. The soldiers of both sides would, I think, have had it so. But the politicians would not. There were those among the victors who would prey upon an honorably beaten and defenseless foe and there were those among the vanquished who proved themselves unwilling to abide by the arbitrament of arms, which they had themselves invoked."

The words have a queerly contemporary ring to them, though it is not of the Peace of Versailles that the author is speaking. But this is one of those books—and they don't come along every year—that show us the past as it was, and the human beings in it. Any shelf of Civil War memoirs will be incomplete that doesn't include Major Small.

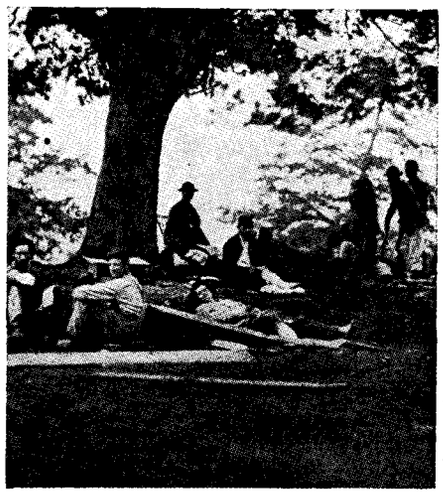
Abner Small enlisted in Company G of the Third Maine, shortly after the firing on Sumter. "We were as green as the new grass underfoot and the leafy elms arching overhead." When he was offered a corporal's warrant, he refused it, at first, but a comrade, Frank Haskell, persuaded him to accept. "Smalley," he said, "don't be a fool. Take it, and creep up." And, in course of time, Corporal Small did creep up—to be Major of the Sixteenth Maine Volunteers. His war experience started with Bull Run, it covered Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the "shoot, shovel, and march campaign" in the Wilderness, and a sojourn in Libby Prison. And, what he saw, he put down, with candor, horse-sense, and Yankee humor. It is interesting to compare memoirs like these with the memoirs of the inimitable Marbot. Marbot was a good soldier and knew it—in fact, he gives you the impression, at times, that he was the entire Grand Army. There isn't an ounce of brag in these pages of Major Small's—but the reader ends up convinced that here, too, is a skilled and able soldier, on entirely different lines.

In the trenches at Petersburg. (Photographs on this page from "The Road to Richmond.")

But what makes the book stick out among Civil War memoirs is Major Small's gift for the telling phrase and the small, odd, vivid scene. On the way to Bull Run, "Hardly a musket-shot was fired; but our commanders were fearful of masked batteries and proceeded as timidly as old maids eating shad in the dark." The rest of the chaplains at Chancellorsville, fleeing madly to the rear and followed by gleeful shouts of "Stand firm; put your trust in the Lord!" and "Come back and earn your twelve hundred dollars!" is described with tight-lipped humor. In the Wilderness, "Once, when the darkness was torn suddenly away, I saw a dogwood all in flower, standing asleep and still. I groped on, stumbled, fell, and my outflung hands pushed up a smoulder of leaves. The fire sprang into flame, caught in the hair and beard of a dead sergeant and lighted a ghostly face and wide-open eyes." It would be hard for any professional writer to better that.

More important than all, perhaps, this book does give a picture of war and what men are like in a war. The licking of a regiment into shape—the "hospital bummers"—the mud-marches — the latrines and the foraging and the confusion of action—they are all here. "Buncombe, too, is talk often made from the speaker's platform, of 'eyes glazing in rapturous delight' as they rest on the Old Flag. . . . To die, under any circumstances, is not an act that brings thrills of 'voluptuous sweetness' to anyone, unless it may be to a lunatic," remarks Major Small, tartly. Yet, how well he knows his soldiers! "It is the buoyancy of youth, the hopefulness of his nature, that makes the man with a gun cheery and light-hearted as he locks step with fate, with death. . . . To him, it is always the man in the next rank who is to be the victim." At the Grand Review, marching at the head of his regiment, he was showered with flowers and bouquets. "I can't say one good word for it, in principle; yet I must admit that I enjoyed my part in the show." There speaks an entirely honest man. And no less honest are his final conclusions, "Sometimes I wish I could forget it all, and again I rejoice that it is indelibly stamped into my being." Neither fire-eater nor pretender, he is able to speak for the men who were the backbone of the Army of the Potomac—and to bring them alive before our eyes.

Mr. Harold A. Small seems to have a remarkable gift for uncovering source-material. Two years ago he edited the journal of Professor Joseph Le Conte, with its fine, first-hand picture of a collapsing Confederacy. Now, in bringing out his father's memoirs, he has made an even more valuable contribution both to our knowledge of the Civil War and our knowledge of human beings.



A Field Hospital

Remedies for Medicine

MEDICINE AT THE CROSSROADS. By Bertram M. Bernheim, M.D. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M.D.

DR. BERNHEIM does not believe in secret skeletons in either closets or privy councils. In "Medicine at the Crossroads" he has dragged those long hidden by the medical fraternity out into the light and ruthlessly stripped them of their fancy trappings. The result is a little frightening, but undeniably interesting.

For thirty years Dr. Bernheim has practised and taught surgery at Johns Hopkins and in Baltimore. During this time he has watched with growing impatience the widening discrepancy between medical knowledge and "the structure erected to house it." Now in no uncertain terms he accuses organized medicine of sleeping at the switch while the new order of medicine as well as society moved quickly by. He deplores, among other things, the doctors' continued "horse and buggy procedure," their ostrich-like disregard of the public's growing impatience with their "ethics," and their ability to control the performance of their own members, their lack of a realistic grasp of their own economic situation. There is sharp vigor in his scolding, but his exasperation is that of an understanding physician toward a recalcitrant patient, who is also a member of his family. If he scolds, it is only for the patient's good, and only after he has diagnosed the illness with clean, surgical precision. And Dr. Bernheim has remedies in his bag

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the patient should consider long before throwing out the window. One of the most significant of these is his suggestion that licenses to practice be issued not for life as now, but for five-year periods until the medical graduate proves his fitness to continue in general practice or to enter a chosen specialty. "If he hasn't kept up a course of study could be prescribed, on completion of which his license would be renewed." Thus, Dr. Bernheim argues, postgraduate work, "whose neglect is one of the greatest weaknesses of medicine," would be compulsory, not voluntary as now, and the public would be protected from the inadequately trained "specialist" who has succumbed to the temptation of more substantial fees. To do away with unnecessary operations and bungling surgical technique—"operations are getting larger, and more involved, and more dangerous every day"—Dr. Bernheim's remedy is even more drastic. He would see "the total elimination of surgeons from private practice." Under his system the patient would be free to choose only his hospital, the chief-of-staff determining the operator indicated by the diagnosis. For this he offers the accepted procedure of the highly successful Mayo Clinic.

In view of the growing complexity of all medical branches, Dr. Bernheim sees specialization as "increasingly the order of the day," and group medicine seems to him the inevitable outcome, although he frankly admits that as a reactionary he personally far prefers the old individualistic type of practice. The prospect of governmental interference is as repugnant to him as to Dr. Fishbein himself, but it can be avoided, he believes, only if organized medicine sets its own house in order, and without delay.

"Medicine at the Crossroads" contains so much concentrated good sense and provocative discussion of hospitals, "fee-splitting," health insurance, etc., that it would require several columns of space to give it adequate attention. One thing is sure, and that is that it will cause considerable rise of blood pressure among its medical readers. "Doctors," says its author, "are at once a group of highly-educated, self-sacrificing, yet simple-minded men who know not the ways of the world." Many "drilled in silence individually and collectively, cloistered in their professional activities," will bitterly resent it as an exposure of their family's dirty linen to neighbors already hostile. But Dr. Bernheim believes that by frank admission that medical procedure like all other, is good, bad, and indifferent, and by refusal to hide anything, we show "that we are not only keenly alive to our problems, but that we do understand them and are trying to solve them."

All in all this is the most interesting and suggestive of the books born of the recent controversy between the government and the doctors. An exciting book, that no one interested in individual or public health can afford to ignore.

From King to Emperor

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF LOUIS XVI. By Saul K. Padover. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1939. $3.75.

NAPOLEON IN REVIEW. By George Gordon Andrews. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

HISTORIANS in America have for several generations been attracted by the study of the French revolutionary period. Here are two more volumes to be added to an already long roll—a roll which the French themselves, in their enviable self-sufficiency, have generally passed over in neglect. Automobiles and moving pictures the French expect from us, but not histories, and certainly not histories of the French Revolution and Napoleon.

Even their own specialists in the revolutionary period, however, will miss a lot if they neglect Dr. Padover's very thorough study of Louis XVI. Disdaining most of the secondary material, Dr. Padover has gone direct to newspapers, memoirs, state and private papers in France and in England, and has brought to light an amazing amount of material on Louis as a human being that has hitherto escaped the French themselves. His book is by all odds the best biography of Louis XVI available in any language. He has avoided the temptation which besets almost all biographers of French revolutionary figures—the temptation to write, if only incidentally, another short history of the French Revolution. He is by no means ignorant of the historical scene in which Louis lived, and when he needs to set Louis in the midst of great events—the October Days, the flight to Varennes, the attack on the Tuileries—he tells his story accurately and dramatically. He has also to cope with the old problem of the origins, or more innocently, the "cause" of the Revolution, and this he does competently in the still orthodox tradition of an "oppressed" nation rising against incompetent tyranny. But he keeps his mind always on Louis.

Louis XVI: "just about the opposite of what is commonly understood by 'tyrant'" . . .

That monarch comes out of his pages a pathetic figure, well-meaning, kindly, irresolute, with a mind capable of an astonishing grasp of details, and quite incapable of fusing details into material for practical judgments. Louis could occasionally be stirred to anger (and apparently to foul language), and he was brought up to believe he had certain kinds of absolute authority. He could be stubborn. But on the whole he was just about the opposite of what is commonly understood by "tyrant," and even by "king." Dr. Padover handles sensibly the matter of Louis's seven-year failure to consummate his marriage with Marie Antoinette, which is more than Stefan Zweig did. He makes only one attempt at medical diagnosis, the suggestion, more plausible than many historians' attempts to turn clinicians, that Louis's corpulence, tremendous appetite, and long spells of bodily lethargy may have had an origin in glandular disturbance. Dr. Padover writes good intense prose, but well short of the exclamatory, panting stuff that unskillful historians often fall into when they try to avoid being dryasdust. He doesn't quite have the courage to write unapologetically in American, but protects such useful terms as "best seller" and "goat" with inverted commas.

George Gordon Andrews, late professor of history in the University of Iowa, left at his death the manuscript of his "Napoleon in Review" in practically complete form, and it is now brought out with a discerning preface by his old teacher, Professor Carl Becker. On Napoleon it is practically impossible to dig up anything new of great importance, though Mr. Andrews has two good chapters summarizing the most important of recent additions to our knowledge of the Emperor, his letters to Marie Louise and the memoirs of General Caulaincourt, both first printed in the 1930's. The book really lives up to its title: it reviews what we know about Napoleon, his personality, his civil and military achievements, his reputation. Clear and sensible, it avoids, as few Frenchmen seem able to do, the extremes of worship and hatred of Napoleon. Andrews was not a brilliant writer, but brilliant writers have often gone far astray on Napoleon. Witness Elie Faure, who begins his centennial tribute with a chapter entitled: "Jesus and He." This book will be a godsend to students looking for "viewpoints" on Napoleon. It has another attraction: practically all the neat phrases, the clichés, and the penetrating remarks that center about his career come in sooner or later, and with nice, accurate references. If you really want to find out just who said of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien "It's worse than a crime, it's a blunder," this is the book for you.

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Introduction to the United States*

BY PEARL S. BUCK

THE natural approach to any country, and one feels, the most real, is through its people. And yet, in the case of the United States this is, I am sure, the wrong *first* approach. The confusion of people here is too great and the changes which have come among us are too swift for comprehension of the country through the people first. It is not only that we spring from every known race on earth and almost every nation. It is also that we have departed from those races and those nations in ways as various.

What we Americans have in common among ourselves, indeed, is very little, it would seem—not race, not history, not tradition, not geography. And yet what we have in common is something and it is not little. It is great and subtle and electric and important, and today it has become a compound of old and new. It is the magnificent rebellious spirit. Our ancestors—adventurers, travelers, criminals, whatever they were—were all rebellious men and women. Their common spirit was the spirit of revolt and independence. Their common desire was for liberty—that is, independence. And yet this desire, working today, carries us into further divergence and not into greater similarity. For this very spirit of independence emphasizes not our likenesses, but our differences.

It is hopeless therefore, I warn all those who come to us to understand us, to approach us primarily and directly through our people. No one mind can comprehend all our differences, much less understand them. It is necessary to have this complexity distilled and expressed before it can be grasped, and this distillation is to be found only in American literature.

The true literature of the United States today is of course the regional literature. We have, indeed, no other. We have not the great novels, for instance, which make universal English literature or Russian or French, because we are not yet universal. A nation in our stage of development cannot be universal. We have not yet related ourselves to the universe in life—how can we then in literature? It is a just criticism that we do not comprehend world events. How can we when we do not know how to comprehend our own events nationally? Those who represent us in our Congress think first of their own states, and not of the nation. Our Senators think barely as far as the nation and not of the world. And this exclusive local spirit is reflected in our literature, for even we have ceased to dream of the great American novel. We realize instead that a group of novels represent us better now, and perhaps will for a thousand years yet, than any one can do, however informed with genius.

Those who are accustomed to the techniques of an older literature than ours will find two things true about our regional novels. First, these novels are not primarily about people. Landscape, natural disaster, the struggle of man with nature—these may be superbly pictured, but men and women and children are figureheads, symbols, rather than living creatures. Subtle characterization is not one of our writing skills. We do not spend much time thinking about people, and

Pinchot

Pearl S. Buck

we spend less in watching them. We write good dialect, and we use local color very well, but these assume always too preëminent a place—they subordinate human beings.

Then, you may justly say, if there is no profound character study in our novels, how can the newcomer learn about our people from them? Ah, but one learns as much from a lack as from a virtue! If in our novels the background is clearer than the foreground, if the characters seem less vivid than the gorgeous mountains and plains upon which they live, that is the way we are. We have not in life mastered our background. We are less vivid than our country. Our background does still subdue us spiritually. We continue in conflict with its immensity, its diversity, its variability, we are still excited by its enormous promises of wealth and resource and space, still kept half-terrified by the violence of nature's possible huge tragedy. We have not mastered our country enough yet to have time to turn our thoughts and energies from its problems and promises to think about ourselves as human beings, either as individuals or in relation to each other and the rest of the world. We have not mastered our background, but since we are of stubborn blood, it also has not mastered us. The struggle goes on. And until you understand this you cannot understand us. You will find us, as our literature portrays us, a people preoccupied with the external struggle with environment and not yet with any internal struggle of the spirit in the world and the universe. That must come later.

The truth is, of course, that, all reports to the contrary, we are still in the pioneer stage of our civilization, as you will see when you read our regional novels. The narrative action you will find there is on the whole of the simple pioneer sort—conflict with flood and drought and poverty, and if now unemployment takes the place of Indians in the earlier novels, the story is the same—external rather than internal. And the books we love best among our own are the ones which deal with simple and illiterate people—factory workers and share-croppers and the less well-paid among persons who use their bodies rather than their minds to earn their bread. We understand them best and we feel a restatement in them of our feelings about democracy and our eternal hope in democracy. We love the plain people, we like to think they are the good, honest Americans. "Here's America," we say, when we find them in our books.

As a matter of fact, here is *not* America. Such people as these are only the lesser part of our country. We are, like all other nations not sunk in poverty, essentially a bourgeois people. Our largest life, numerically and in all other ways, is not among economically depressed persons, but among modestly earning and perfectly comfortable bourgeois who in real life never see actual poverty, and are not much aware of it and never willingly so.

Here is where you will find our regional literature again sadly lacking in portraying the people of America. For an external literature like ours, a literature prepossessed with background and events rather than with character, can find little to write about in people who live sober, decent, seemingly uneventful lives. Our imaginations, trained to the large obvious simplicities of natural disasters, the finding of gold and oil and new lands, the Wild West and Hollywood, are not yet able to find excitement in the inward lives of people who seem to be living only what we call ordinary lives—people whom Proust, for instance, made into such living and exciting creatures. We cannot.

For one thing, as I say, our imaginations have been fed on large simple things and we do not perceive the subtle. Or if we do, vaguely, it is to scorn it, to write of it with an acid temper, not per-

* *On this and the following pages* The Saturday Review *presents, slightly condensed, three papers read recently before the international P.E.N. Congress at the World's Fair.*

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tyranny and stupidity, may some day find a rejuvenating inspiration in the works of those who left their countries, who changed their language, but preserved in themselves what was vital in the spirit of their native tradition.

Many things have happened in the past which in our forgetfulness of history, seem new to us. There have been other exiles in other times, other fugitives who learned new languages and abandoned their mother tongues, other fertile hybrids, other coalescences of cultures. There have been other ages in which men became aware better than we have so far of the creative meaning of exile. Hebrew poetry and prophecy reached their apex in and through the trial of exile. Dante, the father of what is lasting in my native country and will far outlive all barbarization and darkness, the exile *par excellence*, could never have written his poem and reached his own stature, had destiny been lenient to him, and it is only incidental if, instead of conquering a foreign language, he built his own, almost equally new. Practically all the Middle Ages knew thoroughly how fixed fidelity to one's past and place hamper the creative spirit, how good and generous exile is. While introducing me recently to an American learned society, George LaPiana, the distinguished medievalist, the pioneer many years ago of Italian intellectual immigration in this country, reminded the audience of some surprising words out of the so called Dark Ages. It was the very sapient Bernard of Chartres, who stated that no one can become a scholar unless he left his own country and became an exile. It was Hugh of St. Victor in the same twelfth century who, commenting on the words of Bernard, added: "Delicatus ille est adhuc cui patria dulcis est; fortis autem jam cui omne solum patria est; perfectus vero cui mundus totus exilium est," he has a delicate soul who still loves his native country, but he is stronger, to whom all the earth is a country, and he is perfect, to whom all the world is exile. We moderns have perhaps shifted the interpretation of the last sentence from the other-world perfection of the City of God to a City of Man on earth. Yet the words of the mystical medieval doctor remain supreme in their main significance; there is no unity if there has been no separation, there is no real stability unless there has been exile.

Thus exile appears as permanence in metamorphosis; a gift, not a doom, to those who have wanted the privilege of a reconstructed life in the plenitude of this country, a land of new covenants, United-Uniting States. The best answer to the question with which we started, "How can culture survive in exile?", is another question. For we wonder: "How could a European culture survive today except in exile?"

G. A. Borgese is the author of "Goliath: the March of Fascism."

Memories of Oscar Wilde

(*Continued from page 4*)

reckless and unthinking of London, Paris, New York, and why not the boundless prairies of the Middle West? Chicago had given him a king's reception.

Thus, immediately after the end of the Queensberry trial, the Home Secretary let it be signified to Robert Humphreys who was Wilde's lawyer—and happened also to be the writer's—that a warrant would be issued for the arrest of Wilde at 6:51 that evening. That was a word to the wise, its significance being that the boat-train for Paris left Victoria station at 6:50. There was a sufficient crowd of the smart that left by that train but Wilde unfortunately was not one of them. He came into Humphreys's office about two o'clock that afternoon and before Humphreys could get words spoken, he had sunk into a chair, covered his face with his hands, and sobbingly deplored the excesses of his youth, his wasted talent, and his abhorred manhood. He spread himself in Biblical lamentation. But when Humphreys, coming round his table, was intent on patting him on the shoulder and telling him to cheer up and be a man and cut his stick for Paris, Wilde suddenly took his hands down from his face, winked jovially at Bob, and exclaimed: "Got you there, old fellow."

And no persuasions of Humphreys could make him leave for Paris. No. He drew himself up: assumed his air of an autocrat and exclaimed: "Do you think they dare touch me! The author of 'Lady Windemere's Fan'! I tell you the Government must fall if they did it. Why, the French would declare war. Even America!" He really believed it.

He was, by the bye, much more erect in figure than Mr. Morley made him. The writer remembers seeing him in the sunlight at the Bishop of London's garden party at Fulham in a white top-hat and a gray frock coat with black buttons and braiding, much too tight across him. And he seemed, as we have said, very erect, a rather virile figure, if much too stout. The writer has very strongly the vision of Mr. Wilde, who was a common object of the countryside, who sat in a high-backed chair, consuming tea and muffins with the luxury of a great Persian cat coiled up before the fire. And wasn't that in all probability the real Wilde? The man who sighed with relief to find himself in the one house in London where he did not have to stand on his head?

Even today, the writer or painter who is to secure even the modicum of thin oatmeal that will keep the skin over his bones, has to perform a sufficiency of antics in the securing of publicity for himself. But in Victorian days those antics must be still more fantastic because press agents did not yet exist and the public was even more indifferent to the Arts. Almost no Victorian great poet or painter did not owe at least half of the impress that he made on the public to one singularity or another of costume or one or another eccentricity of behavior in public. The process was called alternately *épater les bourgeois*, or "touching the philistine on the raw." And since Wilde was determined and was successful in keeping himself monstrously in the center of the picture, it would seem to have been inevitable that he should have landed where he did whether on account of his personal taste or the remorseless logic of publicity.

The writer is hardened in his half-conviction that Wilde *pêchait par snobisme* by the nature of his few contacts with Wilde in Paris during the later days. Certainly Wilde, weeping and slobbering and surrounded by teasing students, was a sufficiently lamentable spectacle of indigence, solitude, and alcoholism. The students carried on with him an almost nightly comedy. Those were the days of the great Apache scares. Wilde possessed only one thing of value and that he treasured excessively. It was a heavy black ebony cane with a crook for a handle, inlaid with numerous little pin-points of ivory. The students would come up to his table and would say:

"You see Bibi la Touche, the King of the Apaches, there? He has taken a fancy to your fine stick. You must give it to him or your life will not be worth a moment's purchase."

And after they had kept this up for a long time, Wilde, weeping still more copiously, would surrender his stick. The students would take the trouble to take it home to his hotel in the Rue Jacob and next morning, Wilde, who was presumed to have forgotten the over-night incident, would find his stick, sally forth to Montmartre, and the whole thing would begin all over again.

And one may be quite uncertain as to whether the whole thing was not one last, or nearly last, attempt to *épater les bourgeois*. Wilde was so obviously—so almost melodramatically—degenerated, deserted, and soaked in alcohol that one was apt to suspect that that lamentable *mise en scène* was put up for the benefit of the bystander. The writer's contacts with him at that date limited themselves solely to buying him rather rare drinks, or, if the hour were very late and Wilde quite alone, to taking him to the Rue Jacob in a *fiacre*.

One doesn't, of course, know to what extent Wilde was really deserted by his friends. He did, perhaps, tire out the patience of people. But it pleases the writer to consider that, perhaps, Wilde in all this, was really scoring a world at which he had consistently mocked.

At any rate, one night very late, the writer found Wilde, hopelessly drunk, sprawled over a table outside of one Montmartre bistrot or another. The writer was in the embarrassing position of having at the moment only exactly two francs. Wilde might be presumed to be completely penniless. It was, therefore,

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necessary to walk him quite a long way before arriving at a place that would be a reasonable two franc cab-fare from his hotel. It was at first very difficult to rouse the poet; but when he realized who was talking to him he came to himself rather suddenly exclaiming: "Hey, oh yes, I'll come without resistance." He staggered for some yards, true to character, and then threw back his shoulders and we walked quite a distance side by side down the dark Rue Pigalle, he talking with quite sensible regret of the writer's grandfather and the great old house in Fitzroy Square. He seemed to retain even then quite an affection for the memory of Madox Brown who was by that time dead. The walk comes back to this writer as having been excruciatingly painful. He was very young at the time and that the quiet gentleman of Madox Brown's Saturdays should have fallen so low seemed to him terribly a part of the tears of things. Suddenly Wilde exclaimed:

"Hello, what is all this? Why are we walking? Man was not made to walk when there are wheels on the streets."

I said:

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Wilde; I haven't got the money to pay for a cab."

He said:

"Oh, is that all." And thrusting his right hand deep into his trouser pocket produced quite a respectable roll of small notes. He waved to a cab, got into it and drove off, like any other English gentleman, leaving the writer planted there on the curb.

So one may take it as one likes. And as far as this writer is concerned he likes to take it that Wilde did in the end get a little of his own back—out of this writer and all us other imbeciles—and that he died as he lived, not beyond his means, but keeping, as the phrase is, his eyes quite consummately in his own boat. It is at least pleasant to think of him winking at St. Peter as before he winked at Bob Humphreys and exclaiming: "Had you there, old fellow."

The National Game

BASEBALL: The Fan's Game. By Gordon S. (Mickey) Cochrane, New York: Funk & Wagnalls. 1939. $2.

Reviewed by JAMES T. FARRELL

THIS book was "edited" for Mickey Cochrane by Mr. Charlie Moran, a former Newark sports writer, but it is clear that the content and the ideas on baseball are Cochrane's. Mickey Cochrane was one of the greatest catchers in baseball. After only two years' minor league experience, he supplanted Cy Perkins, then a first-class player, as regular catcher of the Philadelphia Athletics. After years with this team, he went to Detroit as manager where he won pennants in his first two years. His playing career was abruptly ended in 1937 when he was hit on the head by a pitched ball and almost killed. This accident, plus illness the previous year, prevented him from equaling and surpassing Ray Schalk's record of having caught in more than a hundred games for twelve seasons. With the exception of Bill Dickey of the Yankees, he was the hardest hitting regular catcher ever to play a long stretch in the American League, and he completed his career as a successful and popular ball player with a lifetime batting average of .320.

Baseball, based on mathematics, is one of the most scientific of sports. For instance, if the distance between bases were changed from ninety to eighty-nine feet, the entire character of the game would be altered. I know of no sport in which *time* plays the same crucial role that it does in baseball, where split fractions of seconds are of such consequence in spelling victory or defeat. Withal, this is one ot the features of baseball little treated in most writing on the subject. An exception is the chapter on baseball in Paul Gallico's "Farewell to Sports." Despite one or two gross errors, Paul Gallico's analysis of baseball from this point of view is excellent and should contribute positively to the added enjoyment and pleasure of all baseball fans who read it. I think that it is the role of time which has been an important factor in contributing to many of the myths and notions concerning inside baseball, master-minding, scientific strategy, and the like which have long been so overemphasized, notions which were given much credence years ago in such books as "Touching Second," by Johnny Evers and Bill Klem, and "Inside Baseball," by Christy Mathewson. Mickey Cochrane's book is far superior to such works.

His treatment of the fundamentals and the strategy of baseball is clear. Despite what some sports writers say, the technical problems which a manager faces are relatively simple. He must know when to remove pitchers and when not to, when to call for sacrifice hits, stolen bases, and hit-and-run plays, when to put in pinch hitters and the like. These are not complicated problems, and as Mickey Cochrane points out, in making such decisions, one must do so in terms of the greater probabilities. He stresses that what is of great importance in baseball is the fundamentals of the game. The fundamentals deal with timing, the use of the feet, position, and the like: "there is nothing to baseball but pitching, hitting, and throwing." One of his best chapters is that which discusses catching, the handling of pitchers, position, the judgment of foul flies, and how the catcher must take account of the wind in making such catches. But he also discusses other departments of the game with expertness; defensive work, pitching, and hitting. And the entire discussion makes clear that the major factor of baseball strategy is to play the percentages, to learn the fundamentals of the game, to base one's defensive work on the greatest probabilities, to play for an opponent's weakness, and for the rest, to go to bat and keep swinging at the ball. Much has been made of the matter of signals and signal-stealing in baseball; Cochrane tells amusingly of how in the world series of 1929, Eddie Collins stole the signal on every Cub pitch, and still the Athletics lost the game. This further

★ ★

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THE POWER OF THE CHARLATAN

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The quack feeds on human misery. He rides to popularity on people's woes. Cultist, demagogue or medicine man, his method throughout the ages has been the appeal to mass ignorance, his chief weapon propaganda. The author, writing of a galaxy of quacks in medieval and modern Europe, throws new light on many of today's movements and leaders by revealing their origins and progress. Translated by Miriam Beard who has added sections on American quackery. Illustrated. $3.75

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★ ★

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 269)

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Eat, drink, be merry; crown yourselves with flowers
About as lasting as the heads they garland;
And, snatching what you can of Life's poor feast,
When summoned to depart, with no ill grace,
Like a too greedy guest, cling to the table.

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emphasizes the central point of the book. A book like this is a clear blast through the befuddlements of the poorer sports writers and most of the radio commentators on baseball.

The anecdotes and humor of the book are not on a par with the technical comment. The writing is clear and adequate, except that at times there are very forced and conventionalized slang metaphors. But these criticisms are minor. This is a good book on baseball. It should definitely contribute to one's fuller understanding of the game. Also, it contains some remarkable action photographs.

Some of the best scenes in James T. Farrell's novels are descriptions of baseball games.

Trouble in the Parish

THE ALTAR-PIECE. By Naomi Royde-Smith. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

HERE is a story of clerical life, with all the quietness of incident and intimacy of happening that is characteristic of its type, which has an unwonted piquancy in its well-handled mystery. Laid in the English countryside during the Edwardian reign, it portrays the usual round of parish duties, the visits, the church services and meetings, the perplexities of etiquette and small jealousies of the parishioners, and, surprisingly enough, considering their familiarity in literature, invests them with a pleasant sort of interest.

Athwart the usual even temper of Mr. Farebrother's parish, excitement ripples with the arrival in the neighborhood of a wealthy widow who shows her eagerness to do her part in the community by presenting to the church a magnificent example of her own handiwork in the form of an altar-piece. Something in her work and something in her personality disturb the minister and his wife, and a vague, apparently rootless sense of ill seizes upon others in her presence. A perplexing disparity between her speech and her conduct, a perverse and sadistic attitude toward those who come within her orbit, disguised under a semblance of well-intentioned kindness, small incidents, and the strange aversion of a young girl to her, build up a background for Mrs. Mayhew which is an excellent preparation for the swift-moving catastrophe which overtakes her. Miss Royde-Smith is a skillful writer who knows how to create tension with delicate strokes and who is adept in holding the elements of her tale in solution until the proper moment for their precipitation. There is reality to her characters and a quiet simplicity to her writing which convey the flavor of scene and personality. Her book in its combination of clerical atmosphere and dramatic incident, strikes a fresh note in mystery literature.

Our Naval Policy

THE RISE OF AMERICAN NAVAL POWER, 1776-1918. By Harold & Margaret Sprout. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1939. $3.75.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER CROSBY BROWN

THE authors of this timely, admirable, and informative book on American naval policy help to meet a long-felt need. The War of the American Revolution naturally marks the beginning of the naval epic of the United States and since that time the questions of need or justification for a navy have been vehemently argued with various factions supporting the antithetical hypotheses that a country without warships never becomes embroiled in wars, and as Alexander Hamilton stated, "a nation, despicable by its weakness, forfeits even the privilege of being neutral."

With the United States now engaged in a naval building program of stupendous proportions it would be well for those people who must ultimately pay for the ships to give this matter some serious thought. In tracing the course of our national sea-power, the work under review gives just this necessary background to enable us to bring an intelligent view to present-day affairs, and seems to point to the absolute necessity of supporting this program of investing millions of the public funds.

According to one theory, the chief objection to a naval expansion program arises from a complete lack of appreciation on the part of the public and their congressmen of the almost unbelievable speed with which obsolescence overtakes relatively new ships. In the merchant marine, the useful life of a vessel may be counted as twenty years. But with the various technological advances occurring in naval construction and allied sciences it has actually happened that some war vessels (notably the 1907 *Idaho* and *Mississippi)* were out of date even before they were launched!

The present accepted policy-determining theories of sea-power are definitely attributable to the unremitting efforts of the late Admiral A. T. Mahan. Despite lessons that might have been learned from earlier wars, this country has long been reluctant to abandon the policy of hit and run commerce raiding to espouse the more effective but less spectacular policy of blockade.

With due respect to our naval personnel, it occurs to this reviewer that "The Rise of American Naval Power" benefits by having been written by those not within the service where a view of the forest might have been obstructed by the trees. This fact has drawbacks, however, and despite most careful and brilliant research, the work suffers the obvious limitations afforded by lacking the seaman's viewpoint and analysis. Admittedly a small point, we object also to the dogmatic and sectionally biased statement that the Union *Monitor* enjoyed the "victory" over the Confederate *Virginia* (ex-*Merrimac).* The importance of this contest does not depend on the selection of a winner and Professor R. S. McCordock's recent monograph would indicate that the actual fight was to a draw. A more significant fact is the omission of the name of Matthew Fontaine Maury, "the pathfinder of the seas." Although Commodore Maury's greatest contribution was to the marine in general, his famous "Scraps from the Lucky Bay" published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* had far-reaching consequences in instigating much-needed naval reforms and contributed in large part to the foundation of the U. S. Naval Academy.

We suggest that this book be placed on the "required reading" list of all connected with or interested in the U. S. Navy.

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WOMEN UNDER FASCISM

In Germany and Italy women are in a position of medieval slavery—according to Sylvia Pankhurst in a masterly article in the June LIVING AGE. Quoting Fascist and Nazi official statements and describing new laws against the freedom and rights of women, Miss Pankhurst presents a terrifying picture of the fate of a young girl in a totalitarian state.

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Reviewed by RAYMOND G. FULLER

THIS series of books is a notable, not to say noble, experiment in adult education, and deserves to succeed. The Peoples Library (without an apostrophe) is designed for people who don't read books. At least not serious books. These people, however, are interested in serious subjects and do read articles of information and discussion in the popular magazines. They go to the public libraries and ask for books on topics of intellectual and personal concern, but usually find that many of the words and concepts are beyond their ready comprehension. Even the non-fiction best sellers are often a bit difficult, besides being too long for sustained attention and too costly in price for private ownership.

The subject matter of the first six little volumes of the Peoples Library ranges from practical advice on interior decoration for those who cannot afford interior decorators to a vivid exposition, by Professor Bryson, of the conflicting philosophies of fascism, communism, and democracy. Professor Overstreet discourses on mental efficiency, or the management of the mind. The book by Dr. Sears deals with the natural resources of America, the scientific and spiritual resources of the American people, and the responsibility of the individual American citizen, for making this a still better country for all of us. Mr. Seager furnishes brief biographies of five contributors to American thought and idealism: Roger Williams, Thomas Paine, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Edward Bellamy. Mr. Wright tells of the growing organization and power of labor and of the controversies within the labor world. It is not the aim of these books and writers to add to the general store of fact and theory.

The Peoples Library is a project of the American Association for Adult Education. Its purposive idea is directly descended from James Harvey Robinson's contention that knowledge needs to be humanized so that ordinary citizens, who are the people who need it most in our time, may find it understandable and useful. He suggested a series of short books to be simply written by a new class of writers. Here it is—"a scientific effort to increase the reading of serious books," as described by Professor Bryson in the publisher's pamphlet.

We are informed in this pamphlet that a great deal of research has gone into the planning and preparation of the books, some of it conducted with special reference to the present project. Numerous studies of reading interests, habits, and abilities have been drawn upon, together with the results of laboratory work on the readability of test materials, from the standpoint not only of vocabulary and style but of typography and format.

It was one of the dazzling discoveries of this research that each book in the Peoples Library should possess the three qualities of lucidity, comprehensibility, and appeal. This perhaps may be regarded as a recognition of the writer's art, long overdue in academic and professorial circles. But whether the findings of the researchers also yielded any helpful hints for writers on how to write, we are not informed. At any rate, the editorial committee in charge of the Peoples Library succeeded in finding writers who can write simply, clearly, and interestingly and presumably so for "ordinary citizens."

There is, of course, a difference between simple writing and simplified writing. Anybody could read the simply written books of Professors Bryson and Overstreet without feeling that he was being written down to—which is likewise true of the book on interior decoration. But only slight and occasional traces of effort in the writing to make the reading effortless are found in the other volumes. In the main, too, the reader's interest is allowed to be natural, emerging from the subject under consideration instead of being whipped up by words and phrases.

Raymond G. Fuller has written books for sociologists and articles for popular magazines.

Stormy Petrel

SEA DUTY. By Yates Stirling. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

IT is an admiral's business to think in terms of precision, efficiency, and loyalty to the large political unit rather than in those of discretion. As a result when brought into contact with the time-serving, evasions, and petty interests of politics, they are apt to pop out with indiscreet and undeniable observations. The process has seldom been better illustrated than in the life of Yates Stirling, who was continually in hot water or getting somebody else into it from the time he reached command rank to the date of his retirement.

He displayed this tendency early, as skipper of a river gunboat during the Philippine Insurrection, but it was not till the days of the Wilson administration that it really came to the fore. At the time he expressed his opinions on the government's policy in Mexico pretty freely, in common with a good many other officers. As far as Stirling was concerned, this resulted in his transfer to command of the submarine force, then an unimportant and somewhat despised unit. But the outbreak of the war turned the submarine Cinderella into a princess and Congress evinced a desire to know how well our own navy was provided in that arm.

Josephus Daniels preceded Stirling before the committee and told the Congressmen everything was lovely, but Stirling ruined the effect by saying, and proving, that our submarine force was badly supplied, undertrained, and had only one boat fit for sea. That gave the

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politicos the creeping horrors; they put him in command of an armed liner, and when he threatened to make a reputation there, marooned him in a district office. He promptly discovered that the navy was buying a million or more life-preservers of a type which he had seen drowning men by the dozen after a ship had been torpedoed in the war zone, and stirred up a fine stew about that. They got him out of there as soon as the war was over and sent him to do sentry-duty on the Yangtse; he got into a magnificent controversy with Chiang Kai-shek. They shelved him in command of the Hawaiian department, and what happened? The Massie case.

The result is a fine running account of how a stormy petrel does his petreling, with considerable comment in a bluff, bold sea-dog style on politics, the necessity for a general staff, and international relations. The bulk of the detail is of interest mainly to the service, but the controversial parts are worth a little time for almost anyone.

The Planetarium in Book Form

THE STORY OF ASTRONOMY. By Arthur Draper and Marion Lockwood. New York: Dial Press. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by FLETCHER WATSON

POPULARIZATION of science in general, and astronomy in particular, is an admirable objective, if well performed, but is deplorable if not. Hence it is a pleasure to welcome the publication of "The Story of Astronomy," which is sympathetic both to the science itself and to the layman confronted by its innumerable mysteries.

In its factual material the book is accurate, and while necessarily omitting much technical discussion, the authors, who are familiar with the problem of popularizing science from their experience at the Hayden Planetarium, outline the present status of astronomical fact, theory, and hypothesis against their fascinating historical development. To the professional scientist, frequently appalled by indiscriminate mixtures of fact and hypothesis, this book, with its obvious attempt to distinguish between facts and hunches, will be welcome as an authoritative reference for his inquiring friends. An example of the differentiation of fact and hypothesis is the excellent discussion of Mars. The authors, while mentioning the fantastic conclusions of various astronomers, have clearly emphasized the indisputable observations. The book is comprehensive in scope, running the gamut of natural curiosity from the early concepts of a flat earth to Einstein's mathematical theory of curved space. While informative enough to satisfy the adult, the book is sufficiently imaginative to entice younger readers.

"The Story of Astronomy" is written in a lucid style in which the technical terminology, although treated familiarly, is defined so as to leave no gaps in explanation. For persons interested in a general popularized survey of astronomy, this book provides interesting reading.

The New Books

Biography

ME. By Brenda Ueland. Putnams. 1939. $3.

Brenda Ueland has written, as her title implies, an intensely personal story of her own life, a life varied enough in background and filled with unusual associations to make good biographical material. And Miss Ueland has the prime requisite for this type of writing; she is supremely interested in the individual. In her earlier book, "If You Want to Write," she insisted that the sole secret lay in writing "what is in you." She has followed her own advice in "Me." The best part of the book is the long early section dealing with her childhood in Minnesota. Her parents were both exceptional people, and the picture she draws of them is delightful, amusing as well as loving in detail. Minneapolis in the horse and buggy days, in a home where the father was a well known judge and the mother a pioneer feminist and educational reformer, and where seven children entertained themselves according to their spirited fancy, takes on actuality under Miss Ueland's treatment. Greenwich Village when it was Greenwich Village furnishes the second locale, and here one meets again, often caught from a new angle, the determinedly unconventional painters, writers, actors, and talkers of the Liberal Club days. Many are called by their own names and the others are easily identifiable by their work or eccentricities or amours. Nor does Miss Ueland shrink from telling her own story very frankly. After marriage, a child, and divorce she set vigorously about making a living, but also and even more vigorously, about making a life. Her enthusiasm has never died down, her faith in her own philosophy seldom wavered. She gives the impression of being as much in love with living at forty-six as she could possibly have been at half that age. She finds a vast number of things exciting and charming and she conveys some of each to her story.

G. G.

Fiction

GRACE I GIVE YOU. By Morton Gill Clark. Morrow. 1939. $2.50.

The Grace that Mr. Clark gives us is by no means inward and spiritual: she is a New York divorcée of 24, finished, pretty, expensively brought up, and perfectly kept, though by an increasingly large number of people. No woman trusts her; no man should. She knows only one trick—how to get her men; with savage pleasure, Mr. Clark shows how she ends by losing them all, especially the idealistic country boy whose clear eyes she managed for a while to dazzle.

Like the portrait of Bella Brill, this portrait of Grace Boardman is one which every Good Woman likes to see a man draw of a glamour girl. Nevertheless, such victories over Pyrrha are Pyrrhic. The very vindictiveness which Grace and Bella have aroused, the very energy with which their creators and ex-lovers denounce them, creates suspicion in any unbiased mind. How very high those grapes must have hung, to have turned so sour!

Mr. Clark has written what is called a "woman's novel"; and probably none but women will read it. And yet, like many another "woman's novel" its smoothness, ease, perception, and lightness make more earnest writing seem somewhat stodgy, as Grace herself shows up the frequent dowdiness of virtue.

K. S.

INEVITABLE DAWN. By Arthur C. Baldwin. Harpers. 1939. $2.

Dr. Baldwin, himself a minister, has written a partially autobiographical novel dealing with the life and problems of a

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young clergyman in a small American city. Little plots and counter-plots of the kind always found in the civic and religious life of such a heterogeneous American community supply the background for the central theme of the story. This theme concerns the interaction and development of new and old ideas in conflict, the necessary relationship between religious and cultural values in democracy, and the vital need for a broadening and strengthening of "church" ideals to reach into all the departments of group living. With a handsome red-haired and unmarried clergyman as hero the love story is bound to be complicated, but the outcome is never doubtful in this novel, which seems keyed to a period of twenty-five years ago rather than of today.

G. G.

History

THE MODERN WORLD. By Alice Felt Tyler. Farrar & Rinehart. 1939. $3.75.

When Mason Whiting Tyler, a promising young historian at the University of Minnesota, died suddenly some years ago, his wife undertook to carry on some of his courses, and the present book is the result of teaching "History I" for more than a decade, being the third volume in a series entitled "The Civilization of the Western World." It is an adequate textbook, but rather conventional; at any rate, the writer of this notice was surprised to find the plan of organization almost identical with that which he used when he taught a similar course twenty years ago, whereas most textbook writers of recent years have tried to discover new approaches. About half of the space is devoted to the period from 1500 to 1815, the remainder to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; which seems a proper balance. The style is clear and readable; the tone of the narrative is neutral; the bibliographies at the end of each chapter are not too long and mention both standard older books and newer works. An attractive feature is the indication from time to time that the last word has not yet been said about many matters, *e.g.*, the Terror in revolutionary France, Cavour, or the origins of the war. There is also constant emphasis on the diversity of conditions in various countries; thus the manorial system existed throughout Europe, but it was not quite the same thing in England, France, Germany, and Italy. Finally, a word should be said about Mrs. Tyler's faculty of conveying reality by means of pithy phrases: "The needs of her people were always matter of concern to Elizabeth, although such concern was only in part altruistic"; or again: for the aristocracy, the wealthy bourgeoisie, and the men of science and letters of the eighteenth century, "life had many attractions: they had letters, art, travel; they were tolerant, a little cynical, critical of everything; but they were humanitarian, and they believed in progress and in the perfectibility of man and his institutions; they were optimistic, therefore, and, on the whole, satisfied." This ought to be an eminently teachable text.

B. E. S.

International

THE NEW INQUISITION. By Konrad Heiden. New York: Starling Press. 1939. $1.50. *Modern Age.* 50 cents.

Mr. Heiden's book presents an objective and dispassionate analysis of the pogroms which raged throughout Germany during the first half of November, 1938. He quotes thoroughly reliable reports of eyewitnesses giving a picture of frightful events in the Reich. Government organized gangs armed with hatchets invaded the homes of the Jewish people throughout the nation during the night of November 9, 1938. They systematically smashed all furniture and demolished anything they could lay hands on.

Hospitals were raided, homes for the aged were wrecked, and Jewish children living in orphan asylums were driven into the streets in the midst of the night. Hundreds of people were beaten up, crippled for life, or murdered. Babies were left helpless to starve to death. All this sounds like a bad dream but it is stark reality. It happened in Germany under the auspices of the German government. Long before the outbreak of these bestialities the government had built new barracks in its concentration camps to hold tens of thousands of German Jews. There hundreds of them were beaten to death or shot, or died of exposure. The reports of these activities are carefully documented and present a terrible indictment.

The author states emphatically that the perpetrators of these pogroms do not represent the German people. They were horrified by these doings although in most cases they did not dare to give expression to their feelings.

There is an ominous warning to the world that the Jews are only the first victims of Nazi bestiality; Protestants and Catholics are slated to be the next victims. It is this which makes this book

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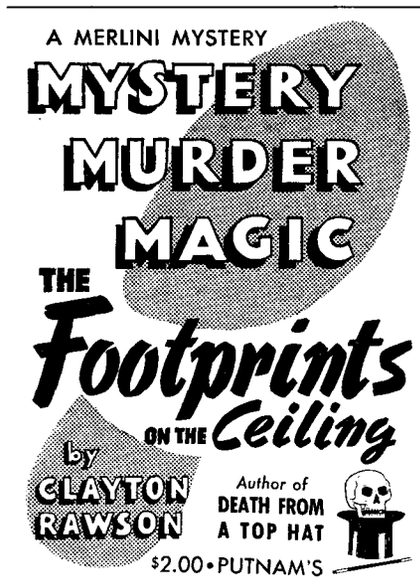
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The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE FOOTPRINTS ON THE CEILING *Clayton Rawson* (Putnam: $2.)	Poisoned corpse of agoraphobic heiress found in East River island mansion beneath sole-marked ceiling. Merlini unmagicks three incredible killings.	Encyclopedically fascinating, with amazing bits about sunken treasure, catalepsy, "the bends," assorted poisons—also gun-play and sky-high suspense.	Immense!
DEEDS ILL DONE *Adele Seifert* (M. S. Mill: $2.)	Somewhat crooked and much-disliked Mo. financier slain in thicket. Woman who found corpse and sleuth Trent handle matters neatly.	Better as character-study of group of nice people overtaken by tragedy than as mystery. Detecting is unobtrusive but adequate.	Entertaining
MURDER IN THE MUSEUM *Eric Heath* (Hillman-Curl: $2.)	Detective Copey and Co. unriddle murder of millionaire mummy-fancier and snare wily killer with fantastic grudge.	Tricks with self-emptying coffin lend macabre touch to opus that hovers close to impossibility throughout.	No
MURDER AT CONEY ISLAND *James O'Hanlon* (Phoenix: $2.)	California sleuth Jason Cordry, visiting Eastern showplaces, runs into side-show sword killing.	Moves as swiftly as roller-coaster on jacket, and lush with color, but writing—and sleuthing—are not too good.	Average

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of unusual interest and importance. Anyone who wishes unvarnished information about the happenings in the Third Reich should read Mr. Heiden's book. Hendrik van Loon has written an Introduction for it.

R. L.

CALLING AMERICA. A Special Number of Survey Graphic *on The Challenge to Democracy. Edited by Raymond Gram Swing. Harpers.* 1939. $1.

To warn every Middlesex village and farm that the fascists are threatening America, Mr. Paul Kellogg and the Survey Associates produced last February—in the spirit of modern Paul Reveres—this stirring defense of democracy. Their special issue of *Survey Graphic,* edited by Mr. Raymond Gram Swing, now appears in book form, after two editions of the magazine version totaled 80,000 copies. "Calling America" is crammed with as many different and interesting objects as a Christmas stocking: photographs and cartoons, a poem by John Masefield, a speech by Justice Frankfurter, and dozens of articles and comments. The list of contributors comprises a genuine all-star cast—Thomas Mann, Bertrand Russell, Alvin Johnson, Archibald MacLeish, Hendrik van Loon, to select only a few at random. Brief, autographed statements from additional celebrities introduce still new points of view, the alphabetical order placing H. L. Mencken and Tom Mooney in striking contrast. To select any individual articles for special commendation would prove a difficult task to the hardiest reviewer, but at least Lewis Gannett deserves praise for his forthright reference to the Negro, and William L. White for his note of sanity from the Middle West. One regrets that the preoccupation with the political, racial, and cultural creeds of fascism abroad should have precluded even one article on the domestic threat arising from prolonged unemployment and political tension. The editors and contributors have done a splendid job, both in excoriating dictatorship and in advertising democracy. If this be propaganda, let us have more of it.

J. F. G.

Miscellaneous

THE POWER OF THE CHARLATAN. By Grete de Francesco. Yale University Press. 1939. $3.75.

This sprightly study of quackery by a Swiss journalist is said to have had a wide sale in Germany. It portrays a series of representative charlatans, alchemists, healers, and illusionists who preyed on the public from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth, some of them well known like Cagliostro, some of them relatively obscure, and seeks to find the common denominator in their characters and methods. The charlatan, himself, it finds, is usually a half educated person, greedy, ambitious, egocentric, and often the first dupe of his own deceit. He has the gift of gab, and works upon his audience by a mere multitude of words, and though his speech when analyzed appears vulgar, incoherent, and illiterate, yet his chanted iterations of vague, high-sounding nonsense end by reducing his hearers to an idiot hysteria of extreme suggestibility.

He operates most successfully in times of confusion and despair, and the inferior, the maladjusted, and the physically and mentally sick are his appointed gulls. The more he promises them the more they idolize him, and the harder they are to disillusion. Besides appealing to his victims' hopes, the charlatan usually plays upon their hates and fears, representing himself and them as persecuted by some evil demon against which he must fight to help them. Sometimes he believes this himself. All this, plus the repeated suggestion that the Germans are the most gullible Europeans, may offer wry consolation overseas, but its patness makes one suspect the objectivity of the generalization. Whether the generalizations be accurate or not, the supporting stories are highly entertaining. There are many illustrations from quaint old plates, not very well reproduced.

G. M.

A DOCTOR FOR THE PEOPLE. By Michael A. Shadid, M.D. Vanguard. 1939. $2.50.

America's aroused social consciousness may well be regarded by future historians as the most significant feature of its great depression. Experiments in socialized medicine have been the immediate consequence of the new appreciation of the plight of the indigent army. In this book we have the story of one such experiment; how it was inaugurated by a Syrian immigrant in Elk City, Oklahoma, and how, after sustaining repeated attacks, it achieved its goal and is now providing two thousand families with medical and hospital service for the sum of twenty-five dollars per year.

Dr. Shadid was born on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, and spent eleven years in the midst of such poverty as no American boy can even imagine. He arrived in America sick and penniless, and soon thereafter began to support himself and to make the money necessary for his training in medicine by peddling cheap jewelry from door to door. In this way he covered practically all the states east of the Rockies, and made several thousands of dollars. He obtained his medical degree from Washington University in St. Louis. After some years of practice Dr. Shadid found himself with an income of from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars, and then it was that he recalled his boyhood dreams of healing the poor. He set out on his great adventure. Coöperatives were popular in Oklahoma, still a pioneer state, and since his plans demanded a hospital, it was only natural that the Doctor should turn to this method of financing and operating. The farmers, labor, and "Alfalfa Bill" Murray were easily persuaded, but not so the medical society. When the hospital was assured, the fight began. The experiment all but collapsed more than once, but at last the forces of evil and organized medicine were defeated, and the book ends with practical suggestions for the starting of similar coöperatives.

If Dr. Shadid had not been so enraged by the American Medical Association,

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he would have written a better book. Unfortunately "A Doctor for the People" is less the dispassionate account of a social experiment than it is the story of a bitter personal quarrel.

M. S. U., M.D.

Travel

DURIAN: A Siamese Interlude. By Noel Wynyard. Oxford University Press. 1939. $3.

The durian is the skunk of fruits, the foulest-smelling fare the Orient boasts, but its flavor is claimed to be irresistible when once the nose has braved it. Siam, Mrs. Wynyard felt, was very much like that beneath the exterior horrors of murder, leeches, loneliness, disease, and thunderstorms which meant invariable death. She had gone out to join her English husband on a teak plantation far in the wilds, and helping him with his chores, doctoring elephants for anthrax and inspecting the logs from a dugout canoe as they tumbled through boiling rivers, she gained some slight knowledge of the land. No doubt Mrs. Wynyard was moved by her adventures, but she has made a poor balance of them. H. D.

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Double-Crostics: No. 270

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

■	■	1-T	2-Q	3-S	■	4-I	5-H	6-B	7-K	8-U	9-E	10-J	11-R	12-M	■	13-K	14-H	
15-J	16-X	17-Q	18-C	19-F	20-A	■	21-Y	22-B	■	23-V	■	24-J	25-O	26-A	27-L	28-W	29-K	
■	30-O	31-R	■	32-G	33-U	34-B	■	35-K	36-I	37-R	38-O	39-D	40-J	41-U	42-L	■	43-J	
44-Q	45-N	46-A	47-V	■	48-B	49-M	■	50-U	51-Y	52-A	■	53-G	54-W	■	55-D	56-T	57-F	
■	58-U	59-F	60-A	61-D	■	62-X	63-V	64-C	65-J	66-I	67-H	68-M	69-L	70-Y	■	71-J	72-F	
73-I	74-W	75-L	76-X	■	77-E	78-V	79-S	■	80-U	81-R	82-S	83-N	84-G	85-O	86-B	■	87-K	
88-V	89-S	90-P	91-R	92-Y	93-T	94-H	95-A	96-J	97-B	98-I	■	99-J	100-P	101-R	102-N	103-V	104-I	
105-T	■	106-E	107-N	108-O	109-V	■	110-G	111-Q	112-V	■	113-X	114-T	115-G	116-U	117-P	■	118-Y	
119-D	120-S	121-V	■	122-Y	123-C	124-D	■	125-D	126-E	127-W	128-A	129-N	130-X	■	131-Y	132-B	■	
133-G	134-T	■	135-D	■	136-A	137-Q	138-H	139-N	140-S	141-M	■	142-U	143-X	144-O	145-A	146-S	147-C	
148-I	■	149-H	150-T	151-V	152-L	■	153-P	154-R	155-V	156-A	157-O	158-F	159-G	■	160-F	161-D	162-M	
163-W	■	164-S	165-D	166-B	■	167-L	168-M	169-T	170-H	171-N	172-F	173-W	■	174-X	175-T	176-U	177-K	
178-R	179-P	■	180-I	181-E	182-V	183-L	184-J	185-P	186-S	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 16 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Coxcomb.

B. Kind of type.

C. Painting by G. F. Watts.

D. Strong and good (of ale).

E. Title of novel by George Sand (1833).

F. Narrow platform for actors above proscenium.

G. Relating to pot-herbs.

H. Quaker author of famous "Journal."

I. Brought to pass.

J. Swedish author (1849-1912).

K. Having a slight coloring.

L. Author of "Indian Summer" (1886).

M. Barren.

N. Ship commanded by Sir Richard Grenville (1591).

O. Strong sweet draught (thought or language).

P. Hasty impression (Fr.).

Q. "Pointer" nearest Polaris.

R. Insignificant.

S. Lollard martyr, friend of Henry V.

T. Greek name of Sumerian Noah.

U. Shapeless.

V. Characterized by indifference.

W. Powerful evil jinni (Arab.).

X. Expunges.

Y. Uniqueness.

WORDS

A.	136	156	26	20	46	128	95	145	52	60
B.	48	97	166	22	132	86	6	34		
C.	123	18	64	147						
D.	165	39	119	125	161	55	135	61	124	
E.	126	106	181	9	77					
F.	160	59	172	57	72	19	158			
G.	53	110	133	32	115	84	159			
H.	149	5	14	94	67	170	138			
I.	98	180	73	36	4	104	66	148		
J.	99	15	65	43	40	10	96	184	24	71
K.	177	87	13	35	7	29				
L.	152	27	183	75	42	69	167			
M.	12	162	49	68	168	141				
N.	102	45	107	129	171	139	83			
O.	30	108	157	144	38	25	85			
P.	90	100	117	185	179	153				
Q.	44	137	17	2	111					
R.	81	37	101	31	91	178	154	11		
S.	120	146	79	89	164	186	82	140	3	
T.	175	150	134	93	1	56	169	114	105	
U.	41	58	50	8	142	33	176	80	116	
V.	78	182	121	155	63	109	23	88	151	103	47	112
W.	127	54	28	163	173	74				
X.	76	174	113	16	130	143	62			
Y.	118	51	21	92	131	122	70			

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"When rations gits slim we just have two meals a day or maybe we'll just have a cup of coffee for breakfast. While we drink the coffee we poke the fun at rich people and pretend that we are having just what we want. We ask each other polite-like to have toast and jelly and bacon and eggs and it shore helps."

THESE ARE OUR LIVES

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THESE ARE OUR LIVES

"I passed a house on a back street in Raleigh and heard a woman hollerin' and callin' for help. I had had two or three drinks of whiskey an' I wuz brave, so I went in.
'What's the matter with you?' I asked.
'I'm goin' to have a baby,' she said.
'Well, who do you want me to git?'
'There's no time to git anybody now, you help me yourself.'"

THESE ARE OUR LIVES

"All I can remember in that way is setting on the front step along about after dark and listening to my dogs off on the ridge running a fox. I was too tired to run with them. Just set and listened, and it was a mighty pretty sound."

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

PHILIP DUSCHNES (507 Fifth Avenue) in his latest catalogue utters a halloo about Edward Taylor (c. 1644-1729) whom Benét and Pearson in their *Oxford Anthology of American Literature* call "the finest 17th-century American poet." Taylor, who was for nearly 60 years the parson of Westfield, Mass., left a MS volume of verses which was discovered by Thomas H. Johnson in the Yale Library. The poems, edited by Mr. Johnson, are to be published next month in an edition of 925 copies. We are told that "Taylor will inevitably be compared to Donne, Crashaw, Quarles and Herbert." ☞This volume is one of five which begin a new series of specialties in American Literature, to be issued by Rockland Editions (N.Y.) with distinguished editorial advisers in several universities. ☞We like Parson Taylor's describing himself as a "titimouse's quill." ☞In the same catalogue the hospitable Mr. Duschnes offers his shop as headquarters for bibliophiles visiting the Flushing Fair and says he will cheerfully advise them "where to dine, where to stay, what to see and how to get around." ☞One of our classicists is pleased by the Latin dinner card of the Harvard Club of Boston at a recent festivity. On the program Professor W. L. Cross was described as *Rei Publicae Myristicarum Lignearum Nuper Summum Magistratum,* a pleasing way of saying former Governor of the State of Wooden Nutmegs. ☞C. Halliwell Duell has resigned from William Morrow and Co., and is said to have plans for the founding of a new publishing house.

☞John K. Colby, of the Country Day School for Boys in Newton, Mass., delights us with a pseudo-translation from Latin, done in the manner we all remember, like this:—

> The mother of Ferdinand who was, by chance, a cow, asked from the latter on account of what thing he was not running and jumping. "It ought to be for a disgrace to you," she said, "not to jump and run." It was pleasing, however, to Ferdinand to sit under a certain cork tree and to perceive the flowers by means of his nose. Ferdinand having been born three years, while he was sitting in the same place, saw certain men approaching to himself, who, in truth, were coming in order that they might choose a bull who, because of great size of body and incredible boldness, might be able to fight with great bravery in the arena of Madrid. Suddenly, however, Ferdinand having been bored through in respect to his rear by the small dart of a bee, jumped with great speed and ran now hither, now thither, and agitated the air by vast breathing.

☞Fred R. Jones, bookseller and collector in Oceanside, Long Island, N. Y., reports that he has run into a valuable nest of MSS, letters and first editions of the late Stuart Merrill, in whom Long Island has interest as he lived in Hempstead as a child. ☞Mr. Jones also asks Walt Whitman enthusiasts to rally round the Jo Davidson statue of Walt, to be dedicated at the N. Y. World's Fair at noon on May 31. ☞Our note on Mr. R. B. Fuller and his Brandied Eggs stirred up considerable correspondence. Norman Dodge, of Goodspeed's (18 Beacon St., Boston) offers Sweet Egg Pie which sounds very good. It is expounded in a folder, *Food of Our Forefathers* which the enterprising Goodspeed issued lately as part of its Genealogical Service (!). Other genealogical delicacies praised by the Goodspeed Gourmets are *French Flummery* and *Syllabub from the Cow.*

☞Goodspeed's has in press its much expected catalogue of American newspapers, which lists over 100,000 individual issues; thought to be the only bookseller's catalogue wholly devoted to U. S. newspapers. ☞Will Solle, the rusticating bookseller of Omena, Michigan (his phone is Northport 8 F 3) says in his spring bulletin (written in an April Michigan blizzard) that since last November 3 books have been his special private standby:—Emerson's Essays, Alexander Smith's *Dreamthorp,* and John Erskine's *Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent.* He offers them at $5 for the three. ☞E. H. J. (Hartford, Conn.) suggests as timely reading the 11th chapter of Daniel, from verse 21, particularly in Moffat's translation. ☞Flodden Heron of the Literary Anniversary Club, San Francisco, reproaches the *S.R.L.,* whose initials are an anagram of R. L. S., for not having made any allusion to Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay, where the S.F.W.F. is being held.

☞Old Q happened to be passing by the unique notion shop of Cremins & Roche, 1188 Sixth Avenue, the day it was abandoning its picturesque home. Since the time of our grandmothers staunch Knickerbocker customers have been dropping in there for eyelet embroidery or lace collars, pantywaists and passementerie and millinery falbalas. We ourself always visited once a year or so to buy a female handkerchief and shoot the ancient cash-carrier, a wooden cup singing on a wire up to the cashier's pulpit. These must have been among the last of Manhattan's cash-carriers and we begged one from Miss Meyer as a souvenir. There are still two or three and we urged Miss Meyer to hold them in case of an offer from some Museum of Commerce. Fortunately the old shop isn't changing its address, just moving upstairs. ☞ We were in a sentimental mood anyhow as the S.R.L. is moving too. This will be the last number emitted from well endeared 45th Street; we now travel to new quarters at 420 Madison Avenue. It is a pang to leave this building with its philosophical elevator officers (one of them a student of severe mathematics) and its memories of other journals both learned and jocular, among them the *Smart Set* and *The New Yorker.* ☞45th Street looks specially cheerful as we pack up a dozen years' piles of unanswered letters. Putnam's Bookstore has painted itself a gay white and green and is having a Mammoth Spring Clearance.

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